# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

### Application #0384TN-1 for Knox County Schools

## A. Vision (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)** | 10 | 8 |

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS presents a comprehensive and coherent reform vision which fulfills both elements described in this criterion: that its vision builds on the four core assurances, and that it articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of a personalized learning environment (detail in next two comments).

2. KCS provides convincing evidence that its vision builds on its work in the four core educational assurances by detailing (in this and other sections and the appendix)

   - how the assurances are aligned with and addressed through the four goals of its 2009 five-year Strategic Plan
   - how they have used Tennessee's RTT reform agenda to accelerate movement on the Plan (with evidence of good progress on items like transition to Common Core Standards, the development of their Education Management Information System, strategic compensation, and school reconstitution).
   - how the PLE vision grows out of that plan (e.g. the Strategic Plan already incorporated the idea of an Individual Learning Plan for all high school students, and multiple pathways for success.  By the most recent progress report on the Plan, KCS announced the opening of an innovative 1:1 STEM Academy, demonstrating its progress. (The principal of the new STEM Academy sits on the PLE Steering Committee for this grant, providing added credibility to the vision.)
   - The one area of concern with building on their work on the core assurances is the continued existence of significant achievement gaps, as discussed in Selection Criterion B. KCS acknowledges this issue, and asserts that it is one of the driving forces for moving to a PLE, as a more effective way of reducing the gaps.

3. The articulation of KCS's vision for a personalized learning environment is clearly laid out in their Classroom of the Future description, which details critical elements such as flexibility, technology infusion, a digital learning management system, multiple modalities for teaching and learning, project-based learning and a customized learning and success plan (CLASP), robust digital  content, and student choice and voice.  The section on Theory of Action provides coherence for the vision, describing its roots in shifting the focus from teacher to learner and constructivist and connectivist models of learning. The Theory of Action Workplan lends credibility to the vision by detailing steps planned to work toward it, and the Theory of Action  diagram provides a succinct overview of the Theory of Action and how the pieces of their plan fit into it. Given the issue they face with achievement gaps, the vision was lacking some representation of how the currently underperforming subgroups would be operating within and benefiting from the transformation.

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)** | 10 | 7 |

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS's whole-district approach to implementing their reform proposal should in many ways positively support LEA- and school-level implementation, while also raising some significant risks.
   - By implementing in the whole district at once, KCS can more easily and quickly leverage change in policies, build momentum, and address their comprehensive approach to changing infrastructures and learning platforms/models.
   - However, the demands of moving a 57,000 student district in a transformational direction will be substantial and may be difficult to meet.
   - KCS acknowledges these risks and has proposed, within its whole-district approach, to implement activities for building infrastructure and creating an instructional foundation for personalized learning in three stages. This is

important in making the approach to implementation more feasible (discussed further in (A) (3), so the case for how they will do this is not as strong as it could be.

2. In terms of its responses to sub-criteria (a) – (c)
   - (a) KCS does not describe the process they used to select participating schools, but given that they are including all the schools in the district, this is appropriate. They also do not present a description here of why they decided to use a whole-district approach, but their extended discussions elsewhere in the application of how this initiative is the next step in their Strategic Plan for the whole district, and their focus on transformational change of teaching models and infrastructure suggest why they chose the approach. KCS does provide appropriate evidence in their school demographics charts that the participating schools/the district meets the competition's eligibility requirements (e.g. over 40% of students from low-income families)
   - (b) and (c) KCS also meets the requirements of proving a list of the schools that will participate and the total number of participating students, those from low income families, those who are high needs, and participating educators.

| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
|---|---|---|

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

1. Since KCS's proposal is being implemented district-wide for all students, all schools/students within the district are participating. Therefore the applicant does **not** have to address "how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools." The remainder of this criterion requires a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal "will help the applicant reach its outcome goals (e.g. the applicant's logic model or theory of change of how its plan will improve student learning outcomes for all students who would be served by the applicant.)"

2. KCS fulfills this requirement well, within its all-district context, with all six elements present, by presenting
   - An in-depth thoughtful explanation of its Theory of Action (which also includes elements of its theory of change), explicitly based on constructivist and connectivist models of learning that shifts the focus from teacher to learning, works through multiple pathways including problem- and project-based learning, increases student engagement and empowerment, and targets the improvement of student outcomes by "meeting developmental and age-appropriate learning needs of each individual student."

   - An extensive and credible "high-quality" plan (containing all the requisite elements) for the development of a personalized learning environment. This "Theory of Action Workplan" details the following for each of its outcome goals: the activities, timelines, deliverable, and parties responsible. This sixteen page document is detailed and thorough, down to the level of activities such as "complete technology integrated lesson/unit plans for first 6-9 weeks," with associated persons responsible, deliverable of the unit plans, and a timeline showing this activity kicking in at three different times for the three staged implementation groups of schools. The credibility for the goals, activities and other elements of the plan is reinforced through supporting explanation in the narrative and appendices, and by the inclusion of expenditure for the activities in the budget.

   - An integrated three-phase implementation timeline that stages approximately one third of students and/or schools for key initiatives to a staggered schedule over the grant period. KCS's intent here is to "enable a high level of fidelity and focus of limited district resources." While the integration of phasing is appropriately varied by the needs of the particular goal and activity, more detail is needed on how the lessons from earlier phases would be leveraged for later phase groups, how the district infrastructure changes would work across phases, etc.

3. KCS also provides evidence of how their logic model links to their implementation plans by including in the Workplan some brief background on the theory of change/action behind each goal. The evident connection of the initiatives and individual activities listed in each table to the theory of change/action statement at the top adds further credibility to the plan.

| (A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
|---|---|---|

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

1. Based on the high quality, transformational plans presented in its Theory of Action Workplan (and related narrative sections) for a personalized learning environment, as well as its track record of planning and implementing other reforms to date (see comment 1 in section B for evidence) KCS' LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes seem suitably ambitious yet achievable.

2. KCS's vision matches appropriately to the level of the goals documented for the individual metrics mentioned in the selection criteria in the following ways:
   a. The increase in annual goals for summative proficiency assessment growth are generally more modest for the student population as a whole
   b. Goals for decreasing achievement gaps are more aggressive, as KCS's vision includes using a PLE transformation to increase achievement among student subgroups that have not been as responsive to previous reform efforts within a more traditional paradigm.
   c. Graduation rates start reasonably high for a mixed demographic, with, however, more aggressive goals particularly in the special education, ELL and economically disadvantaged populations likely to benefit from the engagement, deep learning and self-pacing aspects of the new PLE approach
   d. College enrollment annual goals follow a similar pattern, with goals that seem ambitious and achievable - with a few anomalies like a particularly ambitious four year increase in college enrollment by special education students of almost ten percentage points (significantly above the increase projected for other subgroups, among the group with the lowest starting point).
   e. KCS has taken the additional step of including optional postsecondary degree attainment – this choice to monitoring their students through to college persistence using of the National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker is a positive demonstration of commitment to attain real college and career readiness for their graduates.

# B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)** | 15 | 11 |

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

1. Section (1): <u>KCS demonstrates a clear track record of success over the past four years in efforts to innovate and implement enhanced learning opportunities, including opening a 1:1 technology STEM high school under Tennessee's RTT grant that was awarded a competitive grant to host a regional STEM hub, its Summer Bridge program for mastery of essential skills for high school (91 successful completion and HS matriculation), successful Early Literacy initiatives, a competitive $25 million grant for a Teacher Incentive Fund and $4.7 million from the state to implement strategic compensation, etc. The backing evidence on some of these initiatives provided in the appendix provides credibility and background to these and other claims.</u>

2. Section (1)(a): <u>KCS provides evidence of "steady gains" in student achievement since moving to higher standards in 2010 – proficiency gains were noted in all four tested subject areas in grades 3-8, and in three of six high school courses, with 97% proficiency in </u>U.S.<u> History. Under the new accountability measures for Tennessee's waiver, KCS has met all of its district-level achievement targets (AMOs), improved its graduation rate by four percentage points over two years. </u> The applicant has also established a promising track record of success in college enrollment, with an increase in rates tracked by the National Student Clearinghouse of 59% in 2008, rising to 65% in 2011. <u>This track record of improvement serves as a good indicator for the potential for further gains.</u>

3. Section (1)(a):KCS has not been as successful at closing achievement gaps. They can point to some progress, given that a<u>ll subgroups increased in overall proficiency in every subject, </u>placing it in "<u>Intermediate</u>" status – the second highest accountability category.  In addition<u>, the district has some examples of narrowing gaps (e.g. exceeding their target in reducing ELL v non-ELL gap in HS English)</u>. However<u> KCS did not meet all of its gap closure targets (only 4 of 16).  The district intends to target these gaps through their personalized learning environment, saying their educators had already identified PLEs as "the final frontier" through which to achieve further improvement</u> for these populations, which is an innovative and appropriate plan, however these weaker results translate into some points lost in terms of demonstrating a clear track record of success.

4. Section (1)(b): <u>KCS provides a strong track record of ambitious reforms in its low performing and persistently lowest achieving schools, describing at least five different approaches: reconstitution, changed leadership, use of the TAP system as school-wide design, strengthening magnet schools, and opening alternative pathway schools like a mall-based Volunteer Academy. These schools have shown gains in student outcomes, some more significant and steady than others. One middle school was named a Reward School by the state, for student growth after a leadership change. And f</u>or the 2011-12<u> year, </u>12 of the 14<u> KCS </u><u>TAP schools (all high need) have achieved an overall Level 5 academic growth score as measured by the state.</u> Level 5 is the highest effectiveness rating, representing students making substantially more progress than the state average.

5. Section (1)(c):KCS provides strong evidence of making student performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways likely to inform and improve instruction. This evidence includes a listing of (and backing documents in the appendices on) six different sources: the KCS Parent Portal, School Fusion web pages, the EMIS Homeroom application, Pearson assessment system, state department's accountability website, and Data Days PD.

| (B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points) | 5 | 3 |
|---|---|---|

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

1. Section (2): In general KCS demonstrates evidence of a good level of transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments. A lot of data and other information is made publicly available to all stakeholder through District Strategic Plan Annual Update publications and activities.  Unusually for a school district, it has also started in spring 2012 creating and publishing a "Return on Investment (ROI) Report, which includes  a detailed analysis of current funding sources and allocation practices, expenditures versus student performance objectives, present return on investment for major district initiatives, and comparison studies with other schools with similar demographics but better outcomes.

2. Sections (a)-(d): With regard to school-level cost data, KCS demonstrates that the KCS Education Management Information System (EMIS) captures monthly costs for schools and other cost centers, as well as how the expenditures were funded. School-by-school expenditure data for instruction, instructional and pupil support, and school administration personnel are accessible through the EMIS user interface. The appendix includes a printout of the minimum information required in (a)-(d) of the Selection Criteria.

3. Sections (a)-(d): The evidence on whether KCS makes public the specific data listed in paragraphs (a)-(d) of the criterion (i.e., personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff, actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only, non-personnel expenditures  at the school level) is incomplete. The application  mentions in the previous section that teachers and parents can access data from this database, so it is possible that the four categories of information listed in this criterion are made public in this way, though the application does not confirm this specifically.

| (B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
|---|---|---|

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS does a thorough and convincing job of presenting the ways in which the state context for implementation in Tennessee provides successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory and regulatory requirements to support implementation of the dramatic transformation to personalized learning environments.

2. As KCS points out, Tennessee conditions and reforms enable many of the critical changes they need to pursue in implementing PLE. These include the following:

   - The state's early engagement with common core standards has provided districts like KCS with a head start on implementation of college and career ready standards.
   - New teacher performance evaluation systems add accountability with the inclusion of student achievement and opportunities to begin to evaluate some of the changing teacher roles necessary in personalized learning.
   - Human resource reforms, including strategic compensation, more effective routes to terminating ineffectual teachers, radically reformed tenure, all of which make it easier for KCS to be more innovative and flexible about how it allocates and utilizes teachers within the new paradigm.
   - Tennessee's replacement for collective bargaining, called "collaborative conferencing," according to KCS, "appears to have great promise to encourage a productive dialog between teachers and the system."

3. While KCS provides less evidence on autonomy than on successful conditions, some of the reforms outlined above also relate to autonomy - e.g. the Tennessee First to the Top Act of 2010 provides districts with the flexibility to create alternative salary schedules to replicate the "step and lane" model if they choose.

| (B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
|---|---|---|

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

1. Section (4): KCS engaged a comprehensive collection of stakeholders in the development of the proposal offered in this

application.  These include KCS leadership, teachers, parents, and many community partner organizations. The number and range of community organizations is notable, reflecting the fact that KCS had already run Community Schools and started efforts to expand this model prior to seeking support for this application.

2. Section (a): KCS offers solid evidence of having created and implemented an effective stakeholder engagement process.  The application described how students, families, teachers and principals were involved in the development of the proposal through focus groups, feedback forms. (Evidence including teacher/principal/student focus group attendance, questions, and comments are included in the appendix.) The comments were fed through to the Rtt D Steering Committee, and eventually were embodied in the content of the application.

3. Section (a)(i): The applicant qualifies as an LEA with collective bargaining representation, though they now use the Tennessee established process of collaborative conferencing. KCS involved the local teachers association in the planning process via the Steering Committee and focus groups. The president of the KCEA has signed the application and presented the vision for personalized learning environments to its members, who she notes in her letter of support as having "expressed… excitement" particularly about learning to integrate curriculum and technology. Teachers were also involved in focus groups, and sat on the advisory committee overseeing the development of this grant application.

4. Section (b) KCS provided letters of support and commitment from key stakeholders both within the school community and outside – including the mayor, business community, civic organizations, community-based organizations, and institutions of higher learning. As noted above the range of community organizations is particularly noteworthy, as they cover all the partnerships requires for Community Schools.

| (B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points) | 5 | 4 |
|---|---|---|

**(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS does not in this section provide a consolidated "high quality plan" for analysis of needs and gaps. However, the district largely fulfills the requirements of this criterion because within the grant as a whole it includes evidence demonstrating that a) some this work has already been done, b) other parts are currently on-going, and c) the remainder is included in the high quality plan KCS calls the Theory of Action Workplan:

   - Past work: In this section, KCS details the results of the initial work it did in on analysis of needs and gaps in its 2009 Strategic Plan and subsequent annual assessments of its implementation, with steps already taken to address those needs and gaps. This section does not provide a "high quality plan," which is appropriate, as it is reflecting work already done.
   - On-going work: KCS demonstrates a proactive approach to the analysis of needs and gaps through its recent decision to hire an outside consulting firm to conduct an analysis of the current status of their system technology. KCS partly addresses the requirements of a "high quality" plan for this item. Appropriate information is provided in terms of the goals they have set for the consultant, the deliverable (an analysis of our current status and what is needed to support personalized learning environments as proposed in this grant), and the timeline, to the extent that KCS has allocated the cost of the analysis to this year's general purpose budget. It does not provide activities, the party responsible for managing the consultant, or provide further information for overall credibility – though the fact that KCS have already been through early stages of need and gap analysis, identified this particular analysis as important, and were proactive enough to get this underway prior to decisions on the RTT-D grant, provides some substantiation of credibility.
   - Plans for forward work: KCS also details needs and gaps work it did in preparation for this application, starting with challenges identified through their performance and achievement gap data, and focusing on needs related to developing a personalized learning environment. These are included in the Theory of Action Workplan, which is a "high quality" workplan including goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and parties responsible. All of these criteria are completed to a high standard, with goals being linked back to the District's theory of action/change and its Strategic plan, activities getting into some level of detail, with accompanying deliverables where appropriate, timelines tailored to the different types of activities and reflecting their staged implementation approach, and appropriate "parties responsible" noted. The plan has a high level of credibility both because of the quality of its content, as just described, and because KCS links all the Workplan goals back explicitly to their Theory of Action, and follows through all the Workplan major activities into concrete budget allocations.

2. The logic behind the reform proposal, particularly in terms of how the proposal addresses needs and gaps identified by KCS, is generally solid and convincing. Here and elsewhere KCS outlines how, in its "first wave" reforms, it addressed a first round of needs though attention to the four assurances, and extended into work that started the transformation from teacher to student-focused learning (e.g. by integrating formative assessments and expanding student choice). While these efforts resulted in encouraging increases in overall performance, they did not take the district to the level of

college and career readiness or the level of equity among subgroups that KCS was looking for, and they identified a more substantial move toward personalized learning environments as the most likely route to addressing these gaps. They have already started on this "second wave" of reform, and are far enough in to have identified needs in terms of capacity-building and infrastructure, as well as solutions to those needs, which are included in their Workplan. As mentioned elsewhere, given the achievement gaps that have guided the development of their reform proposal, additional attention to the needs and gaps of subgroups such as the low income and special education students would have been expected.

# C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(C)(1) Learning (20 points)** | 20 | 18 |

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS provides a strong and nearly comprehensive plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment:

   - The extensive text section starts with a good general description, set within their larger strategic plan, and then proceeds to demonstrate how their approach meets every criteria and sub-criteria listed in this section ((b)(v) partially, and all others fully).
   - Then each section is followed up within their Theory of Action Workplan (in Appendix), which details goals and activities associated with the development of these features, and includes timelines, deliverables and persons responsible for the work.
   - Their Theory of Action graphic (also in Appendix) provides an overview of how the main features integrate.

   Together, these provide a credible and convincing "high quality plan." All of the "quality" elements of the Workplan are completed to a high standard, with goals being linked back to the District's theory of action/change and its Strategic plan, activities getting into some level of detail, with accompanying deliverables where appropriate, timelines tailored to the different types of activities and reflecting their staged implementation approach, and appropriate "parties responsible" noted. The plan has a good level of credibility both because of the quality of its content, as just described, and because KCS links all the Workplan goals back explicitly to their Theory of Action, and follows through all the Workplan major activities into concrete budget allocations.

2. In the text sections on each criterion and sub-criterion KCS provides thoughtful and informed strategies they intend to use (or are already using) to address that feature of personalized learning. The extent to which criteria and sub-criteria have been met is noted below, in brief for most, and in more detail for two sub-criteria in order to provide evidence for the depth and quality of the plan provided across the criteria .

   - For subsection (a) (i)-(v): (i) students to understand what they are learning is key to success  (fully met – especially with CLASP (Customized Learning and Success Planning process); (ii) learning goals linked to college and career ready standards (fully met – common core and constuctivist problem/project based learning); (iii) deep learning (fully met – see detailed example below); (Iv) access to diverse cultures (fully met – see focus on connectivist learning and use of technology to access multiple viewpoints and connect with other cultures; (v) academic content and "21$^{st}$ c skill" (fully met – common core and project-based instruction

   - As an in-depth example for subsection (a) on how the , for (a) (iii)  on deep learning, the text section demonstrates an understanding of how deep learning works, makes the connection to Common Core and problem-based approaches and self-directed learning.  Then, in the Theory of Action Workplan they include activities, with timelines and all other elements, for related tasks such as (these are verbatim tasks from the plan, which all have deliverables, timelines, parties responsible, etc. attached to them) developing problem-based learning rubrics, establishing/expanding student advisory councils for PBL, PD on constructivist learning theory/problem based learning/authentic assessment of their personalized learning plan, and development and implementation of the CLASP protocol (which is their personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development), and engaging parents and community with the CLASP process, which is particularly appropriate for deep learning/problem based learning strategies.

   - For Section (b) (i)-(v): (i) personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development  (fully met – **CLASP (Customized Learning and Success Planning process), and landscape of formative**

**assessments, Learning Management System**); (ii) variety of high-quality instructional approaches/environments (fully met – KCS's plans call for their students to **progress through learning environments which introduce technology tools and personalized instruction models in a blended learning format in primary grades (K-3), advancing to a hybrid of blended learning and inquiry-based and 1:1 technology strategies for nine-week instructional units in intermediate grades (4-5), and culminating in full inquiry based and 1:1 technology integration in secondary grades (6-12)**. They also propose multiple pathways, with examples like a mall Volunteer Academy, STEM Academy) ; (iii) high-quality content, including digital (fully met – creating a digital instructional platform to enable use of small, interactive modules tied to specific learning objectives and college and career ready standards, incorporates within a Learning Management System ; (iv) ongoing, regular feedback (iv) (A) updated individual student data (fully met, with existing EMIS, recently expanded formative assessment, planned LMS, CLASP process; (iv) (B) personalized learning recommendations (fully met – CLASP process in about using data, interest and other input to create personalized recommendations) ; (v) accommodations for high-need students to ensure on-track for college and career (partially met – KCS cite some of their existing strategies for assisting high-need students to achieve, including an Early Warning Data system, extended learning time, mentoring, as well as the TAP system and Community Schools social, emotional and practical supports, however, they do explain how these would operate within the new personalized learning environment, or be obviated, or be replaced by different supports within the new model).

- As an in-depth example for subsection (b)(ii), KCS plans to provide blended learning as one of a variety of high quality instructional approaches and environments so their WorkPlan includes, in its various sections, activities, with timelines and all other elements, for tasks such as: design class/teacher rotation plan for 1:1 integrated units, implement technology integrated small group instruction, deliver student technology orientation training, hire TPaCK (Technology, Pedagogy and Content Knowledge) coaches, develop PD curriculum to transform teaching practice, complete PD detailing curricular appropriate tech tools, and evaluate, pilot and bid software, evaluate, bid and procure an LMS, expand wifi, etc.

- For section (c): training and support to students so they can manage their own learning (fully met - CLASP (Customized Learning and Success Planning process).

3. Since the text responses in this section are keyed to the features required in criterion (C)(1), while the WorkPlan is organized under the goals of KCS's existing strategic plan, it takes some tracking to match the appropriate high quality plan elements for all the features relating to a particular criterion or sub-criterion. Following through the main features of KCS's personalized learning plan (see especially two detailed examples provided above – these are just samples) confirmed that the plan meets most if not all of the sub-criteria, with the caveat on partial coverage of strategies for high-need students in the new paradigm.

| (C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points) | 20 | 16 |
|---|---|---|

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

1. Almost all of the general comments provided in section (C)(1) are relevant to(C) (2) (a) –(c) as well. This first comment is a repeat of comment 1. From (C)(1) except for reference to specific criteria and sub-criteria.KCS provides a complete and comprehensive plan for improving teaching and leading for a personalized learning environment
    - The extensive text section starts with a good general description, set within their larger strategic plan, and then proceeds to demonstrate how their approach meets every criteria and sub-criteria listed in subsections (a)-(c) fully.
    - Then each section is followed up within their Theory of Action Workplan (in Appendix), which details goals and activities associated with the development of these features, and includes timelines, deliverables and persons responsible for the work.
    - Their Theory of Action graphic (also in Appendix) provides an overview of how the main features integrate.

Together, these provide a credible and convincing "high quality plan." All of the "quality" elements of the Workplan are completed to a high standard, with goals being linked back to the District's theory of action/change and its Strategic plan, activities getting into some level of detail, with accompanying deliverables where appropriate, timelines tailored to the different types of activities and reflecting their staged implementation approach, and appropriate "parties responsible" noted. The plan has a good level of credibility both because of the quality of its content, as just described, and because KCS links all the Workplan goals back explicitly to their Theory of Action, and follows through all the Workplan major activities into concrete budget allocations.

2. In the text sections on each criterion and sub-criterion KCS provides thoughtful and informed strategies they intend to

use (or are already using) to address that feature of personalized learning. The extent to which criteria and sub-criteria have been met is noted below, in brief.

- For subsections (a) (i)-(1v): (i) supporting the effective implementation of PLE (fully met – especially with PLCs, job-embedded training, and modeling by coaches focused on data-driven decision making, CLASP (Customized Learning and Success Planning process), and constructivist learning; (ii) adapting content and instruction for student-focused, optimal learning approaches (fully met – see especially the TPaCK (Technology, Pedagogy and Content Knowledge) framework and coaches, PD on constructivist, project-based learning, 1:1 technology-infused learning; (iii) frequently measuring student progress toward college and career readiness, and using data to inform student progress and improve the practice of educators (fully met - KCS has integrated more frequent formative assessment, as well as benchmark assessments, and student data is used in teacher development and coaching; (iv) improve teacher and principal practice by using feedback provided by the evaluation system (fully met – TEAM is a multiple measures teacher performance evaluation process for every teacher every year and it is being integrated into KCS PLE professional development plans).

- For subsections (b)(i)-(iii): (i) actionable information to help identify optimal learning approaches for needs and interests (fully met – use of CLASP process, PD on learning options (ii) high quality learning resources, including digital and tools to create and share new resources (fully met – digital LMS, enabling the inclusion and management of a range of high quality content and project resources, as well as productivity and other creative tools); (iii) processes and tools to match student needs with resources and approaches to provide feedback about effectiveness (partially met – the CLASP process provides the means to assess student needs and match them to resources but the way in which this is achieved, particularly in regard to feedback on the effectiveness of the resources in meeting the need, has not been fully described).

- For subsection (c)(i)-(ii): (i) Information from teacher evaluation system that helps leaders improve individual and collective educator effectiveness (fully implemented – TEAM, TAP, redesigned instructional coaching); (ii) practices to continuously improve school progress toward increasing performance and closing gaps (fully implemented – instructional and assessment cycles are tied to coaching cyles and just-in-time training to address the latest issues).

3. Confidence in the plan covering all of the above is increased by the inclusion in the items listed above of several tested frameworks and innovative state or other initiatives. Examples include the TPaCK framework developed by Punya Mishra and Mathew Koehler, which focuses on developing technological solutions to authentic pedagogical problems, The Teacher Advancement Program, a nationally recognized method for creating support structures and incentives that maximize teacher effectiveness. KCS's comment on the TEAM multiple performance evaluation system illustrates how they are able to see all reform now in the light of their PLE initiative: "some of the core instructional skills that are being developed and reinforced through the performance evaluation are exactly those capabilities which will allow us to be successful in personalizing the learning environment for our kids. Grouping strategies, student problem-solving skills, and engaging learning activities tied directly to academic standards are just a few of the expectations in the evaluation system that would buttress our efforts to create an effective PLE."

4. The Subsection (d) Plan for increasing the number of students with high quality teachers and leaders: KCS takes a multi-dimensional approach to increasing the number of students receiving instruction from effective/highly effective teachers, providing evidence of utilizing at least five strategies: TEAM and TAP efforts to improved professional practice, optimizing use of data, APEX strategic compensation/incentive pay structure, the Teach Here initiative to recruit math and science majors, and the Leadership Academy fellowship program . These include some innovative and promising strategies: as a result of TEAM and TAP implementation during the 2011-12 year, KCS report a significant increase in the percent of teachers with the highest level (level 5) TVAAS teacher effect scores. One gap in this selection is some type of strategy relating to increasing the reach of existing high-quality teachers through teacher role re-design, (e.g. master teachers co-teaching or directly managing small groups of classrooms).

In addition, not all of the strategies presented are fully set out with "high quality plan" elements of goals, activities, timelines, parties responsible, deliverables, etc. (some of these strategies – such as APEX refinement and implementation, and reinforcement of TEAM/TAP resources - feature in the Theory of Action Workplan, so have all six elements of a "high quality" plan, but others are not in that plan and have only some of the elements – e.g. no timeline or who is responsible for implementing the Teach Here Initiative or Leadership fellowship program).

## D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|

| (D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points) | 15 | 13 |
|---|---|---|

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

1. Section (D): KCS does not include a separate, consolidated "high quality plan" for this section, however, the strategies provided are generally either already in place, or if projected, are included in the "high quality" Theory of Action Workplan ( though there are some partial gaps, as noted below).

   Together, these provide a credible and convincing "high quality plan." All of the "quality" elements of the Workplan are completed to a high standard, with goals being linked back to the District's theory of action/change and its Strategic plan, activities getting into some level of detail, with accompanying deliverables where appropriate, timelines tailored to the different types of activities and reflecting their staged implementation approach, and appropriate "parties responsible" noted. The plan has a good level of credibility both because of the quality of its content, as just described, and because KCS links all the Workplan goals back explicitly to their Theory of Action, and follows through all the Workplan major activities into concrete budget allocations.

2. (D)(1) KCS provides evidence of most of the practices, policies, and procedures required. The extent to which sub-criteria have been met is noted below in brief:

   - (1)(a) Met fully - A new Office of Innovation and Strategy in the central office to provide cross functional support for the personalization initiative.
   - (1)(b) Met fully - provision of flexibility and autonomy for schools over schedules and personnel decisions enables leadership teams to arrange time around models like blended learning, problem-based learning, and authentic experiences, and to possibly re-configure staffing to support student-based learning styles.
   - (1)(c) Met partially – KCS already demonstrates some opportunity for progression based on mastery, including within math classrooms and course acceleration, and credit recovery, however there do not appear to be specific plans for steps to move toward progression-based on mastery rather than seat time for all.
   - (1)(d) Met fully – KCS already provides some opportunity for multiple times and ways to demonstrate mastery of standards, and has included plans for realizing this more fully within the new PLE approach.
   - (1)(e) Met fully – KCS already provides learning resources and instructional approaches adapted and fully accessible, including a catalog of intervention curricula for SWD and ELL, assistive technology, co-teaching, etc, but also an expectation that the PLE will greatly enhance instruction and choice for these students.

| (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
|---|---|---|

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

1. Section (D): KCS does not include a separate, consolidated "high quality plan" for this section, however, the strategies provided are generally either already in place, or if projected, are included in the "high quality" Theory of Action Workplan ( though there are some partial gaps, as noted below).

   Together, these provide a credible and convincing "high quality plan." All of the "quality" elements of the Workplan are completed to a high standard, with goals being linked back to the District's theory of action/change and its Strategic plan, activities getting into some level of detail, with accompanying deliverables where appropriate, timelines tailored to the different types of activities and reflecting their staged implementation approach, and appropriate "parties responsible" noted. The plan has a good level of credibility both because of the quality of its content, as just described, and because KCS links all the Workplan goals back explicitly to their Theory of Action, and follows through all the Workplan major activities into concrete budget allocations.

1. Section (D)(2): KCS's current LEA and school infrastructure includes many of the required aspects for infrastructure to support personalized learning. The major gap is a learning management system to enable real time information access and to integrate systems and a range of software, which is part of their high quality workplan for the PLE initiative.

2. (2)(a): Met partially - KCS demonstrates that it has addressed equity in access issues through a range of strategies, including: allocation of instructional resources to schools based on a per pupil basis, with differential levels of support via a weighted staffing formula. Students and parents have access to web-based resources outside of school (including a Parent Portal) and their Community Schools Initiative and afterschool programs provide access to computers and content for students and families who do not have access at home. However, there is insufficient information in the plans about how those without home access will be provided with better options as the electronic systems become more central to the learning.

3. (2)(b): Met fully - KCS also provides technical support to students, educators, parents and other stakeholders through a

system-wide Help Desk accessed by phone or through "School Dude," and electronic help submission. Each school will have a skilled TPaCK coach to provide integrated technological and pedagogical support. Lastly, students will be trained to support teachers and peers. One nice touch is that KCS plans to design assessments and/or certifications for teachers and students who develop and share these technical competencies.

4. (2)(c) Met fully - The current EMIS data system, with its Parent Portal, is limited in its ability to provide real-time information that is exportable to other electronic learning systems in open data format.  To address this, KCS has included in its high-quality Theory of Action Workplan the choice and implementation of a Learning Management System that will remove this limitation in current infrastructure.  Their specifications for the new system will include connectivity with other systems in the district as well as with those of their community schools and afterschool partners.

5. (2)(d)Met fully - KCS fulfills the requirement of using inter-operable data systems, in the sense that the current EMIS platform incorporates student performance information, human resource, budget and budget data that can be linked. Teacher performance data is also to be incorporated, staring from the 2011-12 data.

# E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)** | 15 | 12 |

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS demonstrates that it has established a rigorous approach to continuously improving its PLE plan.  Their approach includes:

   - The Chief Innovation Officer focusing on monitoring and measuring investments by the new Office of Innovation and Strategy's offices of Accountability, Project Management, Grant Management  and Human Capital Strategy.
   - The establishment of a PLE Advisory Committee with 25-30 members, including a parent liaison
   - The adoption of a cycle of inquiry for planning, implementing, reflecting, adjusting and iterating.
   - The development of a formal program evaluation framework.
   - The CIO ensuring the inclusion of objectives which further the PLE transformation in the district's five-year strategic planning process
   - Building on an existing ROI reporting process established in the district in spring of 2012.

2. The last bullet demonstrates one of several instances where KCS has already begun implementing strategies required for this application in its strategic planning process over the past few years. KCS says that the spring 2012 ROI report acknowledges the "need to accelerate improvements in our academic outcomes and recognizes that the strategies and initiatives necessary to make these improvements require resources beyond our current funding level and present a compelling case for a detailed analysis in the following areas: 1. Current funding sources and allocation practices; 2. Expenditures versus student performance outcomes; 3. Present return on investment for major district initiatives; 4. Comparison study of other schools with similar demographics but better outcomes." This represents an innovative approach for school districts, and an excellent start in the direction of sustainability for its PLE initiative.

3. The process described does not address sufficiently the timeliness and regularity of the feedback in their cycle of inquiry.

4. The application also does not directly address the continuous improvement process after the term of the grant, but given that it can already demonstrate an active cycle of evaluating, iterating and moving forward on its 2009 Strategic Plan, it is likely to continue to do this as a part of "what it does."

4. KCS also has plans to publicly share information on the quality of investments as outlined in (2) below

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)** | 5 | 4 |

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS  provides an actionable plan for communication activities with a range of stakeholders. This includes:

   - Leadership by the Office of Public Affairs in conjunction with the CIO
   - A multi-media marketing campaign with the Great Schools Partnership

- Inclusion in the annual Strategic Plan Update and State of the Schools Address
- Community meetings and public forums building on the 35+ such meetings already held since 2010

2. The plan mentions the use of social media and the district website but does not include any detail on forward-looking communication possibilities that might be made possible within the PLE, including where, for example, authentic learning experiences might bring the community into that environment working with students.

| (E)(3) Performance measures (5 points) | 5 | 3 |
|---|---|---|

**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

1. Based on the high quality, transformational plans presented in its Theory of Action Workplan (and related narrative sections) for a personalized learning environment, as well as its track record of planning and implementing other reforms to date (see comment 1 in section B for evidence) KCS provides generally credible and ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup for required and applicant proposed measures.

2. The district provides all the required measures and appropriate applicant-proposed performance measures for its district-wide implementation. Its choice of age-appropriate measures of academic growth are solid - related to Reading/ELA and math, Its indicators of grade-appropriate health or socio-emotional leading indicator were appropriately differentiated by age - percentage of students with office referrals in the younger grades and those with a suspension during the year in the upper grades, though a more sensitive leading indicator for the latter could have been chosen. Again its choice of ACT scores makes sense for college readiness.

3. However, KCS does not address all the requirements of this selection criteria in terms of the applicant-proposed measures. Specifically it does not provide the following:

   - Its rationale for selecting that measure
   - Howe the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative lading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action
   - How it will review and improve the measure over time

   The scoring of this sub-selection criteria reflects this omission.

4. For some of the applicant-proposed measures, KCS does provide the methodology for calculating the measure, and in one or two cases, some assumptions made.

| (E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points) | 5 | 5 |
|---|---|---|

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS provides convincing plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the RTT-D funded activities and use this information to improve results. Their plans include:

   - A commitment for the UT at Knoxville's Institute for Assessment and Evaluation to provide implementation assessment and milestone achievement evaluation services, based on surveys at midyear and end of year 1. Feedback will be collected and communicated to the PLE advisory committee
   - Consistent and routine evaluation of student performance data, TEAM/TAP data, PLC assessments, etc.
   - Work with the Tennessee Consortium on Research, Evaluation and Development (T-CRED, at Vanderbilt's Peabody College), which is the evaluator for the Innovation Acceleration Fund and Tennessee Teacher Incentive Fund, for both of which KCS is an awardee. T-CRED's evaluation of compensation reform will contribute to its RTT-D evaluation.
   - Information from evaluations will be fed into their internal continuous improvement process though the Office of Accountability.

2. In an innovative move, KCS will also build on an existing ROI Report process establish in the district in spring of 2012. This is another instance where KCS has already begun implementing strategies required for this application in its strategic planning process over the past few years. KCS says that the spring 2012 ROI report acknowledges the "need to accelerate improvements in our academic outcomes and recognizes that the strategies and initiatives necessary to make these improvements require resources beyond our current funding level and present a compelling case for a detailed analysis in the following areas: 1. Current funding sources and allocation practices; 2. Expenditures versus

student performance outcomes; 3. Present return on investment for major district initiatives; 4. Comparison study of other schools with similar demographics but better outcomes."

# F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)** | 10 | 8 |

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

1. In general KCS documents in a thorough and comprehensive way a "reasonable and sufficient" budget to support the development and implementation of their proposal. They have fully met sub-criteria (a), (b), and (c) (i) and (ii) by :

   - Providing thoughtful rationales for their investments and priorities
   - Clearly identifying all of the funds –both Rtt-D and other external and internal funds. These include KCS general purpose funds, state, federal, school project TAP federal, TN College Access, G Schools Partnership, and community donation funds.
   - Clearly identifying the one-time investments versus on-going operational costs.
   - Focusing on strategies that will ensure long-term sustainability.

2. They were particularly convincing with their rationales for their main expenditure sections and how they arrived at the numbers, e.g.:

   - Tech for PLE: They already assessed their tech needs in Spring of 2012, resulting in decisions to lease tablets (according to their determination, an overall cost advantage vs. purchase) and to increase technical support staff (they are very low vs comparison districts)
   - PD– They explain this is a key driver for establishing a PLE because a PLE puts teachers in a different role, and how their PD expenditures move teachers toward this new reality

3. It is noteworthy that their budget represents follow through on all the major elements of their Vision for PLE and their Theory of Action Workplan, as noted on their primary and associated criteria information on the Summary Project LIst table. They group these into three projects, relating to Technology for PLEs, Professional Development for PLEs, and Management and Accountability for Innovation and Improvement. (The Professional Development budget also includes items related to change in the structures of teaching and learning, such as site visits to other schools to evaluate how 1:1 classrooms work in terms of teacher role re-design, use of time, etc.) This helps to bolster the credibility of the application as a whole.

4. There is one expenditure missing from this budget that could make the vision for PLE more difficult to achieve: updating to a new, more robust Student Information System. KCS has instead chosen to include this item as an Optional Budget item The question is whether the main proposal to develop a PLE can be seen as having a reasonable chance of success without a new SIS. KCS notes that the existing SIS is becoming outdated and a more robust SIS would provide a better base for the information-based personalized learning environment being proposed. On the other hand, KCS has made some significant progress toward implementing data-based strategies with its existing SIS infrastructure, and has shown that it is proactive and resourceful about what it needs to move forward. Also, importantly, they do include in the budget a Learning Management System/Instructional Management System, which is the infrastructure piece closest and most important to the development of a PLE. So as long as KCS ensures that the new LMS can work with the existing SIS (a requirement which they are including in their LMS requirements) presumably they could implement their proposals without a new SIS funded by RTT-D. This area of concern is reflected in the score.

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)** | 10 | 7 |

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS provides a meaningful plan for sustainability after the end of the grant period, which includes a thoughtful description of strategies and a top-line consolidated budget for ongoing costs for the three years after the grant ("years 5, 6, and 7"). Most of their strategies meet two of the criteria for a high quality plan in terms of providing goals and some top-line activities, however they do not all have specific deliverables, persons responsible or timelines - e.g. for the budget reallocation strategy below, there is no indication of a plan for how many years the district will need to get into its PLE environment before significant funds can be reallocated from textbooks to digital resources. The plan derives

some credibility, however, from the quality of the content it provides, as well as the fact that sustainability is addressed in a number of other places in the budget and application as a whole (see last point).

2. The district demonstrates an understanding of the issues involved in sustainability, and makes a convincing case that their PLE proposal is not something "created' for the purposes of obtaining this grant, but rather a direction in which they were already heading, and which they will continue to follow, pursuant to their on-going strategic plan. (This is confirmed by evidence on the strategic plan in the appendices.) Their level of understanding and commitment is demonstrated in the following passage:

"The KCS believes that the best way to ensure the sustainability of the project goals for the RttT-D competition is to ensure that the Theory of Action Work Plan outlined in this proposal is not simply an "add-on" to our "usual" work, but rather that the innovative educational improvement and personalized learning efforts delineated in our grant proposal *are* our work…. the innovative educational approach that we have outlined in this application is… integral to the success of our strategic plan."

3. They present two convincing strategies they say drive their approach to sustainability:

   - Budget Reallocation.  KCS makes a sound argument that the successful implementation of the PLE will eventually obviate the need to spend as much money on some existing items - e.g. textbooks (as they are replaced by digital sources), some remediation interventions that currently operate in high cost ways outside the "mainstream" classroom system (as all  children will be able eventually work at their own pace and receive needed inputs just-in-time), and  the costs associated with HS long-block bell schedules currently used to enable individual help, offer electives for student interest, etc. (which, again, will be baked into a PLE design).

     Indeed, the viability of this strategy is already evident in some 1:1 districts across the country, where costs do not come down overall, but are freed up in some areas to fund other inputs.  This way of looking at a budget also bolsters the credibility of KCS as a district that understands the PLE strategy as something that will truly change the role of teachers, schedules, class structure and other major aspects of learning.

   - Success Investment. KCS's second strategy on sustainability is to develop pilots or demonstrations of the effectiveness of new strategies, and once their benefits are proven, to take the investment idea to the community for financial support. They cite their work with Community Schools as a successful past/ongoing example of this. Their early Community Schools successes are being rewarded with increased community backing for expansion.

4. KCS has also considered sustainability issues in a number of other areas of their budget. For example, the narrative for the technology for personalized learning section notes that in this sub budget for infrastructure and technical support personnel, the budget request to RTT-D over a four year period averages $361 per student, while KCS funding from other sources averages $592. Similarly, system-wide TPaCK trainers will be reduced in year four and the financial responsibility for school-based coaches will be assumed by the KCS general purpose funds at grant's end through re-purposing other instructional coaching and instructional technology positions that will have been superseded by then.

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points) | 10 | 7 |

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS provides a strong application on the Competitive Preference Priority, based  on their recently established and expanding partnership for Community Schools.

2. (1) KSC provides convincing evidence for a coherent and sustainable partnership, including:

   - The existence of a strong lead partner  organization (GSP - The Great Schools Partnership),  with whom JPS has a signed MOU. GSP leads a coalition of a full range of community, health, local and county government and family support organizations, including: United Way, City of Knoxville, Know County, Urban League, Children's Hospital, hospitals, arts and culture organizations, Knoxville Chamber of Commerce, local congregations, youth-serving organizations, area higher education partners, and many more. (Over 20 signed letters of support from such organizations are included in the appendix.)
   - The completed Community Schools Implementation  Plan (including plans for scale up) included in the appendix.

> GSP is following the well-tested Community Schools model, which focuses on three interconnected support systems: a strong core instructional program during the school day, expanded learning opportunities for students and families, and a full range of student and community supports.
>
> - This partnership grew out of a pilot initiative at one elementary school, which is in its third year of implementation. The expanded model is being implemented in four elementary schools in the 2012-13 year, with scale-up planned (see below).

2. (2) KCS provides 11 population-level goals (the text says 10, but there appears to be an extra one) that align with this application. There are 7 academic goals (4 short term and 3 long term) and 4 family and community support outcomes. These are appropriate and helpful within the Community Schools framework.

2. (3) KCS provides extensive description of how:

   - (a) the partners will track the selected indicators, led by the Community Schools Site Coordinator at each school, using the EMIS data warehouse, gathering data directly, and partnering with outside organizations who are already tracking some of the family and community data.
   - (b) The partnership implements an analysis to determine schools of highest need, based on 1. Academic success, 2. Free lunch, 3 numbers with mental health referrals Each school site-based committee, lead by the site coordinator, will also use this, as well as other determinations of local unique resources and challenges to target school resources to improve results.
   - (c) Their strategy to scale the model: GSP and KCS already have a strategy, included in the appendix – to scale from 4 elementary schools in 2012-13, to an additional 10 elementaries, two middle and two high schools in 2013-14, and to all 49 elementaries in the next six years.

5. (4) As KCS points out, integration of services is at the heart of the Community Schools model nationally. KCS's plan for integrating education and other services for participating students, centers around the tested and proven role of the Community School Site Coordinator, who works closely with the school principal, manages the integration of various service components for children in the school, and oversees a community school site council, while the GSP central organization focuses on developing partner relationships, funding partners, etc.  This is a credible and convincing approach that appears to follow the models currently being used in other Community School, Full-Service Community School, and Promise Neighborhood models with success.

6. Section (5) (a)-(e) of this Competitive Preference Priority asks applicants to describe how the partnership and LEA would "build the capacity of staff in participating schools… by providing them with tools and supports to –" assess needs and assets of participating students, identify and inventory the needs and assets of the schools and communities, create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select and  implement supports, engage parent sand families in decision-making about solutions, and routinely assess the applicant's progress in implementing its plan."

   KCS meets this sub criterion by explaining that the development of the Site Coordinators will be determined by the GSP's COO in collaboration with the school district, and that other staff development needs will be based on each school's needs assessment and the site-based committee's recommendations. The Community Schools Implementation Plan, MOU, and job descriptions of the Great Schools Partnership COO and Site Coordinators also provide evidence relating to the capacity building and supports asked for: e.g.  for assessing students' needs and assets, identifying and inventorying  the needs and assets of the schools and communities, and engaging parents and families in decision-making about solutions. The Site Coordinator and site council provide the decision-making infrastructure to select and implement supports. KCS will monitor performance at last annually, and their MOU with GSP, requires the partnership to monitor and report on agreed measures.

7. (6) KCS meets this sub criterion partially by identifying educational and family and community performance measures (see part (2) above.  It describes desired results for each of these measures (e.g. decrease student discipline referrals by 3-5% or "decrease the percentage of obese or overweight children by 3-5%,  but does not provide these in the form of annual goals that can be suitably judged as  "ambitious yet achievable" or not.

## Absolute Priority 1

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **Absolute Priority 1** | Met/Not Met | Met |

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS meets the Absolute Priority by coherently and comprehensively addressing how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create a personalized learning environment (as described in this priority, with all of its various elements) designed to improve teaching and learning (in the ways described) and improve student achievement, decrease achievement gaps (and attain the other goals described).

2. First, the application details significant work to date on the core educational assurances, through involvement in innovative state of Tennessee initiatives and the district's own efforts, The progress they have made with the assurance areas a) has resulted in a quality teaching, learning and leading foundation on which to build a PLE, and b) gives confidence that this is a district that has already shown it can get things done. (Significant evidence of steps already achieved are provided in the appendices.) Although this work has increased overall performance, the district still has significant performance gaps, particularly with their low income and special education subgroups. Acknowledgment of this shortfall and investigation into how better to deal with these populations is a good part of what led Knox County Schools to commit to the development of a personalized learning system.,

3. It is also clear that KCS has already begun building on their core assurance work. They have, in essence already created a bridge from more advanced assurance work toward a personalized learning approach. The efforts of the district over the past couple of years on their Strategic Plan, their ROI Report, their Community Schools Partnership, and their 1:1 STEM Academy demonstrates that they had already independently chosen this path and made some headway. (Significant evidence provided in appendices.)

4. This "bridging" work results in a coherent and mature vision for a personalized learning environment clearly laid out in their Classroom of the Future description, Their Theory of Action section provides coherence for the vision, based on its roots in shifting the focus from teacher to learner and constructivist and connectivist models of learning. Their Theory of Action Workplan (which fulfills all the criteria for a "high quality plan") and significant sections of the narrative (especially Selection Criterion C) detail steps to achieve the vision desired by RTT-D: to use collaborative, data-based strategies and 21$^{st}$ century tools to deliver instructions and supports tailored to the needs and goals of each student, with the aim of enabling all students to graduate college and career ready. Their Theory of Action diagram provides a succinct overview of how all the pieces fit together in a comprehensive way. The credibility for their high quality plans is bolstered by the fact that activities are also followed through with concrete budget allocations.

5. KCS's proposal includes all of the elements required to meet Absolute Priority One's intent to "create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators:"

   - A phased implementation model, with schools starting full implementation in three phases
   - A guiding architecture for the transition, targeting blended learning at the elementary level, problem-based 1:1 learning at the high school level, and a hybrid of the two at the middle level;
   - Strategies for a personalized learning plan for and owned by each student (the CLASP protocol – for Customized Learning and Success Planning), along with platforms provided by a Learning Management System and 1:1 computing environments;
   - Deep learning through problem-based and other constructivist approaches and student choice;
   - Specific plans for the development of group work and other opportunities to develop 21st century skills;
   - Increasing formative assessment and ongoing feedback to inform instruction;
   - A variety of learning environments and content (including digital) all aligned with college- and career-ready standards;
   - The creation of Technology, Pedagogy and Content Knowledge (TPaCK) coaches to model and coach technology-pedagogy integration and role redefinition for teachers, as well as other efforts ot increase the effectiveness of educators

6. KCs does not fully develop in this application plans for how the more dramatic changes in redesign of class structure, schedules, learning time, or the role of the teacher will eventually be implemented in their fullest form. However, this does not stop them from fully meeting Absolute Priority One. Some of these more advanced structural redesigns do appear within their vision, and steps toward them are included in professional development or infrastructure activities included in their Workplan.

| Total | 210 | 169 |
|---|---|---|

# Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points) | 15 | 4 |

**Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS's first Optional Budget Supplement is for the purchase of a new Student Information Management system.

2. KCS presents a clear rationale for the need for the system, as their current SIS was purchased in 2002/3 and is outdated in terms of functionality and user interface. KCS has a strong vision for how a new system would assist in their development of a PLE, and have already developed a comprehensive RFP. The proposed budget appears reasonable in relation to the proposed design and project activities.

3. However, there are a number of ways in which this request does not fully comply with this Optional Budget Supplement application:

   - the department says that "applications for this funding will be judged on the extent to which the applicant has a clear, discrete, and innovative solution." It appears the solution is expected to target a new, problematic, or untested area or population segment – given that section (1) asks for "the rationale for the specific area or population that the applicant will address." While the examples provided do include "data system" there is no description in KCS's application about how their plan to implement a new Student Information System for their whole district is "innovative"

   - The application also calls for a high quality plan to be developed and carried out across "two or more LEAs." KCS does not include a fully "high-quality plan" (of the standard of KCS's Theory of Action Workplan, with goals, activities, deliverables, parties responsible, and evidence of credibility). KCS is also proposing to implement this Optional Budget Supplement activity by itself, without another LEA. While this is not an eligibility requirement, it is to be reflected heavily in point allocation.

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points) | 15 | 4 |

**Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS's Second Optional Budget Supplement is to expand Extended Day Services as part of their Community Schools initiative.

2. KCS presents a clear rationale for funding this proposal in order to subsidize the attendance of at risk families/students who are not financially able to participate in aftercare programs at Community Schools offering this program. After care programs can provide remediation, enrichment, deep learning and emotional and social supports, which aligns well with the development of personalized learning environments. The proposed budget appears reasonable in relation to the proposed design and project activities.

3. KCS presents a less clear response to some other requirements for the optional budget. For example, the department says that "applications for this funding will be judged on the extent to which the applicant has a clear, discrete, and innovative solution."While expanding the number of students able to access its extended-day program could help KCS serve better the more at-risk elements of its population, the optional budget doesn't make a case for the ways in which this might be an "innovative solution."

4. And there are two ways in which this request does not fully comply with this Optional Budget Supplement application. The application calls for a high quality plan to be developed and carried out across "two or more LEAs."

   - The application does not include a fully "high-quality plan" (of the standard of KCS's Theory of Action Workplan) - i.e. it does not provide goals, tasks, timelines, deliverables and persons responsible.

   - In addition, KCS is proposing to implement this Optional Budget Supplement activity by itself, without another LEA. While this is not an eligibility requirement, it is to be reflected heavily in point allocation.

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points) | 15 | 4 |

**Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:**

1. KCS's Third Optional Budget Supplement is to expand the number of schools in their Community Schools initiative.

2. KCS presents a clear rationale for funding this proposal in order to expand the number of schools, students and families implementing the Community Schools model, which supports a focus on individual children's needs and strengths, and aligns well with the development of personalized learning environments. The proposed budget appears reasonable in relation to the proposed design and project activities.

3. KCS presents a less clear response to some other requirements for the optional budget. For example, the department says that "applications for this funding will be judged on the extent to which the applicant has a clear, discrete, and innovative solution."  While expanding the number of schools running as Community Schools could help KCS serve better the more at-risk elements of its population, the optional budget doesn't make a case for the ways in which this might be an "innovative solution."

4. And there are two ways in which this request does not fully comply with this Optional Budget Supplement application. The application calls for a high quality plan to be developed and carried out across "two or more LEAs."

   - The application does not include a fully "high-quality plan" (of the standard of KCS's Theory of Action Workplan). i.e. it does not provide goals, tasks, timelines, deliverables and persons responsible.
   - In addition, KCS is proposing to implement this Optional Budget Supplement activity by itself, without another LEA.  While this is not an eligibility requirement, it is to be reflected heavily in point allocation.

# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

### Application #0384TN-2 for Knox County Schools

## A. Vision (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)** | 10 | 8 |

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

In goal #1, the 10-90-90-90 plan should be articulated more, especially with reference to why it is important that 90% of the students should take the ACT.

The EMIS is an excellent tool for data gathering.

The "Teach Here" program should be explained more in depth in this section as opposed to just referring to the appendix.

#4 Turnaround Schools demonstrates many effective methods.

The Vision for the Classroom of the Future section is very ambitious and explained effectively; however, it should be explained even more.  The applicant should desrive if this is a vision for every classroom.

The goals articulate a clear and credible approach to accelerating student achievement and student learning through developing effective teachers.  Increasing equity is not addressed thoroughly.

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)** | 10 | 9 |

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

(A)(2)(A) The description of the process that the applicant will use to select schools is district-wide.  All students in all schools will participate.

(A)(2)(B&C) Properly demonstrated.

| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 7 |
| --- | --- | --- |

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The outline of the plan is strong.  Some areas need more explanation such as the following:  the technology curriculum, the problem-based rubrics, the rationale and purpose of the reflection journal, and the CLASP protocol.

An explanation of which schools will be parts of which groups (A,B,C) should be included along with the rationale for the choice.

A more detailed explanation of each deliverable of the work plan is needed.

An description of the TPaCK coaching position is needed, especially if 25 are to be hired.

The term "heat map" is not defined.

The applicant does not describe the 37,620 "devices" listed on chart 1.1

This plan is high quality and very detailed.  The description of how the reform proposal will be translated into meaningful reform is inadequate and needs more depth.

| (A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
| --- | --- | --- |

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The overall graduation rate of 86% does not seem like the rate of a struggling school district.

The outlined goals are ambitious and achievable if progress is met.

The applicant demonstrates a steady increase in test scores for all areas across the board.  These goals are achievable.

The applicant demonstrates achievable goals to decrease achievement gaps.

The applicant demonstrates achievable goals to increase graduation rates.

The applicant has outlined a plan to steadily increase college enrollment, especially in the area of special education.

# B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

| | Available | Score |
| --- | --- | --- |
| (B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points) | 15 | 13 |

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

(A) Overall, KCS has demonstrated that they have improved student learning outcomes as evidenced by steady across-the-board acheivement improvement over the last 3 years in virtually every subject and every grade level that is tested in the state.

KCS has not had significant success in closing achievement gaps.  Under new accountability measures KCS only met 25% of its goals in this area.

KCS has demonstrated a steady increase in its graduation rate since 2008 and as of 2012 the overall increase is significant.

While KCS did address the ACT scores in this section, it did not address college enrollment.

(B) KCS demonstrated a commitment to reform at its lowest-achieving schools by changing leadership and forming partnerships with Stanford University and Knowledge Works in two specific schools.

(C) KCS has demonstrated a commitment to making student performance data available to all by implementing many internet resources including a parent portal.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)** | 5 | 5 |

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

(a) KCS makes available all four categories of school-level expenditures via Education Management Information System (EMIS) as demonstrated in the narrative and the appendix.

KCS has not addressed specifically in this section if the information is made available publicly.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)** | 10 | 9 |

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

It is not clear how the Collaborative Conferencing initiative, the NCLB waiver, and the listing of various legislation in the state of Tennessee relates to the implementation of the personalized learning environments in the proposal. While KCS has been thorough in painting a picture of the recent school-related legislation within the state, the connections to the proposal has not been threaded throughout this section. KCS only makes a brief statement on this connection in the next-to-last paragraph in the section.

The state supports the application as evidenced by the letter from the commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Education.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)** | 10 | 8 |

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

(a) KCS devised a steering committee which contained many types of stakeholders from inside the district in addition to business leaders and professors from a the University of Tennessee. Parents were also included on the committee.

(ii) The local teachers association, KCEA, was involved. KCEA is a collective bargaining unit.

(b) KCS provided an exceptional number of letters of support from numerous key stakeholders covering numerous areas mentioned in this section. A senator, congressman, and mayor provided letters of support.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)** | 5 | 5 |

**(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:**

KCS has demonstrated a high-quality plan and has identified needs and gaps in a thorough manner. KCS recognizes that the achievement gap within the district is a problematic area and has outlined plans to address this issue.

KCS has leveraged technology as a key component of the plan for reform. Multiple levels of support for this technology are noted.

# C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(C)(1) Learning (20 points)** | 20 | 14 |

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

KCS includes personalization as a key strategy in their plan as evidenced by the CLASP initiative.

(a) (i) KCS states that understanding what students are learning is important, but does not give a thorough explanation of how it intends to integrate this idea.

(ii) Problem-based learning is indeed a good example; however, KCS does not thoroughly address how they will structure learning to acheive the goals of college readiness of measure that progress.

(iii) KCS emphasizes critical thinking to achieve this goal.

(iv) This section is lacks depth and discussion of how this goal will be accomplished within the framework of the proposal.

(v) Strong evidence is used to support the goals in this section.

(b) (i) Instructional content and skill development are not specifically mentioned in this section. There seems to be an overemphasis on the assessment aspect in relation to learning goals.

(ii) The use of techonology is a strong component of this section and the overall proposal.

(iii) Good examples noted.

(iv) EMIS and the parent portal are strong examples of how this will be accomplished.

(v) College and career ready standards or graduation requirements are not mentioned in this section.

(C) Age-appropriate training will be designed.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)** | **20** | **18** |

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

(A) (i) Intructional coaches are a key component of this implementation.

(ii) This section is explained in appropriate detail.

(iii) Multiple assessments are in place to measure progress.

(iv) Principal evaluation systems are not mentioned in this section.

(B) (i) Professional development specialists are integral facilitators that will help KCs respond to individual needs.

(ii) Once again, the technological resources demonstrated by KCS continue to be a strong aspect of this proposal.

(iii) The CLASP process accomplishes this goal appropriately.

(C) (i) The inclusion of principal preparation is commended. The coaching model will also be helpful. School culture and climate should be mentioned.

(ii) This is adequately described; however, more detail is needed.

(d) KCS has demonstrated multiple ways in which the district will increase effective instruction. The areas of hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas are thoroughly addressed.

KCS has a high quality plan that seeks to improve instruction and increase college-ready requirements.

# D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)** | **15** | **12** |

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

(a) The establishment of the office of innovation and strategy is an excellent way to support this proposal.

(b) Roles and responsibilities for educators and noneducators is not adequately addressed.

(c) This section is not adequately addressed in a broad sense. Also, math is the only specific subject mentioned.

(d) This section is commendable and thoroughly explained.

(e) The ELL aspect of this section is particularly strong.

The applicant has developed a high quality plan that incorporates technology and human capital development to enhance student mastery. Strong leadership teams at each site are an integral part of this plan.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)** | **10** | **8** |

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

(a) When discussing parental access, everything seems to be web-based.  This works fine for the parent that has a computer and internet connection, but with respect to income level and access, the district should address how those parents without technological resources will be able to have access.

(b) This section is thoroughly addressed.  KCS provides technical support to students and parents in many ways.

(c) A description of the type of vendor or the requirements for the vendor are warranted for this section.  KCS currently has limitations in providing data to students and parents.

(d) The EMIS platfrom sufficiently achieves these goals.

# E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)** | 15 | 12 |
| **(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:** | | |

The establishment of the Office of Innovation and Strategy is an appropriate mechanism for monitoring and measuring the project goals.  The sharing of the information is more thoroughly detailed in (E)(2).  KCS has not mentioned any of the specific investments mentioned in this section such as professional development, technology, and staff.  A more thorough explanation is needed.

Timely and regular feedback was not addressed.

The PLEAC will be responsible for monitoring the success of the grant.

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)** | 5 | 5 |
| **(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:** | | |

KCS has presented a very comprehensive plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.  Town halls, teacher talks, and public forums are good examples.  This plan is highly commendable.

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)** | 5 | 1 |
| **(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:** | | |

KCS did not address the following:

      (a)  Its rationale for selecting that measure;

      (b)  How the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern; and

      (c)  How it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

      The plan does contain ambitious yet achievable performance measures.

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)** | 5 | 3 |
| **(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:** | | |

The partnerships with the University of Tennessee and Vanderbilt are valuable componenets of the evaluation of this process.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of technology is not adequately explained.

While parents/stakeholders are mentioned, a more thorough discussion of working with community partners is needed.

The applicant has a plan in place for assessment and evaluation which includes external evaluators.

# F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)** | 10 | 9 |

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

KCS has identified all the funds that will support the project, including outside funding. The budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal. A comprehensive description of the funds is found in the application and states all of the expenditures in explicit detail. The rationales provided in each subsection are appropriate.

One criticism is in regards to technology for personalized learning environments. What are the devices that KCS intends to use? A more detailed explanation of the reasoning for leasing vs. buying is also needed.

KCS has not adequately distinguished one-time investments from ongoing operational costs.

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)** | 10 | 7 |

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The plan is sustainable; however, the applicant has not included descriptions of support from state and government leaders for continued financial support.

Local support is addressed.

The applicant has not adequately addressed the sustainability of the plan beyond the term of the grant.

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)** | 10 | 8 |

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

(1) KCS has demonstrated examples of sustainable partnerships with public and private organizations including The United Way and the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce.

(2) KCS has demonstrated numerous short-term and long-term goals that align with the proposal including educational results, educational outcomes, and community supports such as walkability scores.

(3) EMIS and Community School are key components of this proposal. A-D of this section are adequately addressed in the sub-sections.

(4) The details in this section are vague in reference to integrating education and other services for participating students.

(5) An explanation (or a reference to where it is located within the proposal) of the Parent Academy and how that is established is needed here.

(6) The goals are ambitious yet achievable.

## Absolute Priority 1

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **Absolute Priority 1** | Met/Not Met | Met |

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The four primary goals of KCS are:

1. Focus on the student

2. Effective educators

3. Engaged parents and community

4. Infrastructure: Enabling learning

The effort to align with college and career-ready standards is commendable. The focus on technology to meet academic needs is a an excellent part of this proposal. KCS acknowledges that it needs to do more to decrese the achievement gap. The professional development goals to create more effective educators is outstanding. KCS has demonstrated a committment to a high quality plan that focuses on improving teacher effectiveness and increasing student achievement through personalized learning environments. College readiness and is also a key aspect of this plan.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Total** | **210** | **171** |

## Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points) | 15 | 10 |

**Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:**

KCS wishes to use it's optional budget to purchase an SIS that aligns with Common Core Standards. This seems reasonable.

The option to expand extended day services does not include a plan for sustainability after the grant money has ended. This is a valuable resource, but without a long-term commitment and a plan for sustainability, stakeholders might face the reality that the program will have a finite term.

The Community Schools option is a viable expenditure.

As a whole, there does not seem to be much justification for including these requests in optional supplements. The SIS and Community Schools proposal could be included within the grant proposal. Without a sustainability plan, the expansion of extended day services seems problematic.

It is unclear whethere there are 1, 2, or 3 optional budgets submitted.

# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

### Application #0384TN-3 for Knox County Schools

## A. Vision (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)** | **10** | **10** |

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

1. The applicant successfully demonstrates a vision for reform based on the four core educational assurance areas beginning with the adoption of standards and assessments. A clear and credible approach for the adoption of standards and assessments to help accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning has been articulated. Formative assessments enable teachers to see right where each student is instructionally without impacting a student's individual grade. This allows students the freedom to respond without fear of consequence - enabling teachers to develop an individual picture of each student's progress, the progress of the class as a whole - and the quality of the teacher's instruction. With this

knowledge the teacher can design instruction to deepen student learning and ensure understanding. Basing the formative assessments on the Common Core will help the applicant prepare their students for success no matter where the students settle or go to school in the United States.

- Implemented system-wide formative assessments in reading and math for grades 3 - 8
- Implemented system-wide formative assessments in Algebra I, English II and Biology
- 2011 - 2012 full implementation of the Common Core State Standards reading/language arts and math grades k - 2
- 2011 - 2012 partial implementation of the Common Core State Standards in math grades 3 - 8
- Targets 2013 - 2014 for full implementation of the Common Core State Standards k - 12

2. The applicant successfully demonstrates a vision for reform for the core educational assurance area of buidling data systems that measure student growth and success and articulates a clear and credible plan for building data systems to help increase equity through personalized student support.  A robust and interoperable data warehouse will allow teachers to view individual student progress over time - developing a deeper and broader picture of each student - allowing the student to be known.  This will help teachers develop lessons that are personalized, engaging and meaningful - targeting a student's academic interests.

- Developed a robust and interoperable data warehouse - Education Management Information System (EMIS) which includes
    - Student information and performance indicators
    - Human capital statistics
    - Individual school cost centers and budgets
    - Instructional improvement data

3. The applicant successfully demonstrates a vision for reform in the core educational assurance area for recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers, and articulates a clear and credible plan for recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals will help accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning to help accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning, and increase equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. Hiring the best teachers and then training them well will help the applicant meet all four core educational assurances.  All research supports the positive effect a good teacher has in the classroom.

- Teachers
    - Participates in the Teach Here initiative for Math and Science
    - Employs the TEAM and TAP evaluation systems
    - Implemented an incentive pay structure for teachers APEX
- Principals
    - Participates in the Leadership Academy Fellowship Program
    - Hosts a New Principals Academy
    - Implemented and incentive pay structure for principals APEX

4.The applicant successfully demonstrates a vision for reform in the core educational assurance area of turning around low achieving schools and articulates a clear and credible plan for turning around lowest-achieving schools

- Reconstituted two low performing high schools
- Moved best principals to low performing schools
- Incentive based pay for principals demonstrating quality leadership in low performing schools with special emphasis placed on stable leadership over three or more years
- Seeks alternate pathways to successful graduation
- Partnered with the Simon Youth Foundation

5. The applicant demonstrates a clear vision of reform with a clear,credible, comprehensive and coherent plan to help facilitate common and individual tasks based on student interests. Plans to adjust the classroom physically allowing for multiple teaching modalities, plans to infuse technology, and plans to encourage student voice and choice - show an emphasis on instruction that encompasses more than tests, standards, textbooks, etc.  Environment and instruction go hand in hand for many students and the plan as described - when implemented - will develop successful personalized learning environments.

- A plan to physically reconfigure classrooms allowing for flexibility and mobility amongst/between the students
- A plan to infuse technology into the hands of every student and how it will be used
- A plan for teachers to use information from the data warehouse to enhance daily instruction
- A plan to encourage student voice and choice
- A plan to switch the focus from teachers to students

- A plan to provide professional development for teachers
- A plan to involve the parents and community
- A plan to develop a personalized learning environment for each individual student

The applicant scores high. All four core educational assurances are addressed as described above. Due to the district's five year strategic plan already in place, the district is in a solid position to build on the established infrastructure and momentum and further develop/enhance personalized learning environments for children.

| (A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
|---|---|---|

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

(a) The applicant successfully demonstrates a description of the process

- Will follow 5 year strategic plan - already in place
- District wide implementation
- All students will participate - 100%
- District low Income students - 49%
- Will begin with personnel capacity building and professional development

(b) The applicant includes a list of the participating schools (88) and utilized the provided grant sample to assure compliance with the grant. One hundred percent of the students will be served and 49% of the students are low income.

(c) The applicant successfully details all participants

- Schools - 88
- Educators - 4700
- Students - 57,424
- High Need Students - 31,164
- Low Income Students - 28,210

The applicant scores high. As described, the applicant's approach to implementing the reform proposal will support high-quality LEA-level and school level implemetnation. The detail and scope of work included in this section places the district in a very good position to move forward.

| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
|---|---|---|

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides a high-quality plan dscribing how the reform proposal will be scaled up.

- The high-quality proposed plan is aligned with district 5 year Strategic Plan. Additionally, the district has developed a Theory of Action Work Plan for this grant proposal which allows for:
    - Focus on the student
        - Learning Environment 6 - 12
        - Blended Learning Environment k - 5
        - Multiple Pathways
        - Student Competencies
    - Focus on Effective Educators
        - Leadership Competencies
        - Technology Competencies
        - Instructional Competencies
        - PLC Competencies
    - Focus on Parents and Community
        - Community Schools
        - Parent University
        - Parent Portal
    - Focus on Infrastructure
        - Instructional Technology
        - Learning Management System
        - Expansion of district wireless technology infrastructure

> Blended Learning 1:1 technology tools
>   - Technology support break/fix
>   - Education Management Information System
>   - Student Assessment and Performance Data
>   - Performance Management
>   - Continuous Improvement Process

The applicant successfully demonstrates a high-quality plan for district wide change - all of the above listed initiatives apply to the district as a whole

The applicant successfully demonstrates a high-quality plan and the ability to reach its outcome goals.

- The enclosed table includes
    - Goals included are substantial
    - Activities are meaningful
    - Timelines is realistic
    - Deliverables are realistice
    - Responsible Parties detailed
    - Participants/Audience targeted

The applicant scores high. The applicant's plan is of high quality.  The applicant clearly explains a high-quality plan that is scaled up, will support district-wide change and will help the applicant reach its goals. It is well thoughtout, well-organized, and comprehensive - placing the district in a solid position to move forward.

| (A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
|---|---|---|

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant successfully demonstrates ambitious yet achievable:

(a) The applicant successfully demonstrates ambitious yet achieveable goals for performance on summative assessments. Established goals for Improved student learning and performance

- Goals are broken down by test
- Goals extend out to 2016-2017

(b) The applicant successfully demonstrates ambitious yet achievable goals for decreasing achievement gaps  through increased equity.

- All goals listed above include an overall goal for all students and individual goals for each demographic group
- Achievement gaps are identified
- Additional table includes specific goals for decreasing gaps

(c) The applicant successfully demonstrates ambitious yet achievable goals for increasing Graduation Rates. Goals included and are further broken down for overall students and individual goals for each demographic group

(d) The applicant successfully demonstrates ambitious yet achievable goals for College Enrollment.

(e) The applicant successfully demonstrates ambitious yet achievable goals for Post secondary degree attainment.

The applicant scores at the bottom end of the high spectrum. While it is ambitious to set the same goal of achievement for each grade level - it is hard to determine if the goals are achievable without knowing the goal gap that now exists at each grade level.

Missing are summative assessment goals for grades k - 2, and the state target for 3rd grade Math 2014 - 2015 is 64% while the district lists 60.1 %.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)** | 15 | 13 |

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant successfully demonstrates a clear record of success:

(a) The applicant demonstrates the advancement of student learning and achievement over the past three years

- Improvements in instruction have been made at all levels; high, middle and elementary
- Student achievement has steadily risen over the past three years on standardized tests 3 - 8
- Mixed success at the high school level on specific end of year subject area assessments
- Increased high school graduation rates
- Limited success in closing achievement gaps

(b) The applicant successfully demonstrates intiatives to reform persistently low achieving schools

- Reconsitituted two high schools
  - Partnered with outside organizations
  - Teachers within targeted schools provided with an extended contract
- Changed leadership in low performing schools
  - School leader given choice when building a school leadership team
  - Selected leaders provided with extended contracts
- Utilization of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP)

(c) The applicant demonstrates the publicizing of student performance data

- District, Department and student data are available to parents
- Student, Department and District Data are available to teachers
- Teachers and parents have the ability to communicate with each other through teacher web pages
- Professional Development is provided to teachers on the use of data

The applicant scored at the low end of the high spectrum. The applicant demonstrates successful advancement in student learning with some  mixed results regarding achievement gaps. and undefined college enrollment. The applicant successfully demonstrates initiatives to reform low performing schools, and successfully demonstrates the publicizing of student performance data.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)** | 5 | 3 |

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant demonstrates the recording and tracking of the above mentioned data in the EMIS system; however, it is unclear who has access to view this information.  The descriptor specifically states making public  - not just recording and tracking.

The applicant scores in the medium range as the district is promoting awareness within - but has yet to move to the public domain for transparency. Through the planned LMS system - the district will achieve greater transparency for parents and students.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)** | 10 | 10 |

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant successfully demonstrates successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirments to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal.

Tennessee has:

1. Adopted the Common Core State Standards

2. Developed and implemented a new teacher evaluation system tied to student academic outcomes

3. Become a Race to the Top state participant

The district has received letters of support from the state and local cities and communities regarding the implementation of this plan.  The Tennessee DOE and local mayors have endorsed the plan and the district.

The applicant scores high.  Tennessee has positioned the state for success and has allowed the district the freedom to pursue

the grant.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)** | 10 | 10 |

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant successfully demonstrates:

(a) Meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal included meetings with the below listed participants.

- Formation of a Steering Committee
    - School Personnel
    - Teachers Union
    - Community Business Assoc
    - Parents
    - Local University
- Individual School Focus Groups

(b) Meaningful stakeholder support is evident in letters from:

- Senator
- Congressman
- Mayors
- Teachers Union
- District PTA
- Great Schools Partnership
- Knox Area Chamber Partnership
- Knoxville Area Urban League
- United Way
- Etc.

The applicant scores high. The applicant provided a description of the process that included the listed participants to solicit input and feedback.  The applicant includes letters of support including one from their collective bargaining unit as listed above.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)** | 5 | 5 |

**(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant successfully demonstrates evidence of a high-quality plan of analysis.  The applicant already has conducted an internal review to determine needs and gaps, clearly recognizes district successes and areas of concerns - and has taken action.  Also, in place are plans to hire an outside consulting firm to determine what is needed to support the technology required for the proposed personalized learning environments.

The applicant recognizes follow up stages within the district - professional development for teachers, acquiring a learning management system, enhancing the technological infrastructure and plans to support technology in each school.

The applicant scores high. The applicant has presented a high-quality plan that identifies ambitious yet achievable key goals and activities, realistic timelines and deliverables, and clearly identifies responsible parties and targeted audiences.

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(C)(1) Learning (20 points)** | 20 | 18 |

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant successfully demonstrates a high quality Theory of Action Work Plan for improving learning and teaching by

personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college and career ready. The strategic plan of the district - which is already in place - details a five pronged approach: capacity building; recognition; effective, differentiated instruction; personalization; and whole-child supports. The Theory of Action Work Plan builds on the district strategic plan with Infrastructure, Accountability, Effective Educators, A Focus on the Student, and Engaged Parents and Community.

a. With the support of parents and educators:

- (i) To encourage students to understand what they are learning and accomplish their goals, the district will work to help students connect what they are learning now to their future success - and develop an individual blueprint of learning strategies for each individual student.
- (ii) To encourage students to identify and pursue learning and developmental goals that are linked to college and career ready skills, the district will build student capacity: time management, goal setting, persistence, collaboration and other academic success skills.
- (iii) To encourage deep learning, the district will provide opportunities for student centered and self directed learning supported by teachers, parents and community experts.
- (iv) To provide access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives that motivate and deepen student learning, the district will encourage students to use technology to connect with others and find information outside of the classroom.
- (v) To encourage students to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, the district will implement the 21st centruy skills of: teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving, the district will also concentrate on the professional development of its teachers - creating an environment of heightened expectations and project-based learning.

b. With the support of parents and educators, there is a strategy to ensure that each student has access to:

- (i) A personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the students to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure he or she can graduate o time and college and career ready: the district will implement a Learning Management System designed to foster student ownership of learning. Students, parents and teachers will access this system identifying student strengths and weaknesses and through tools such as formative assessments develop a personalized learning plan for each individual student.
- (ii) A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments: the district provides multiple pathways to student success and demonstrates full understanding that a "one size fits all" approach to instruction does not work. Examples include their magnet high schools, their use of small student groups and small learning communities, and the aspirations put forth in this grant for the flexible use of technology in each and every classroom.
- (iii) High quality content, including digital learning content as appropriate, aligned with college and career ready standards or graduation requirements: the district is transitioning to the Common Core State standards which will guide the preparation of college and career ready. With this technology initiative - the district has positioned itself well to move into a high quality content rich instructional environment which will include digital learning.
- (iv) Ongoing and regular feedback including at a minimum-
    - (A) Frequently updated individual student data that can be used to determine progress toward mastery of college and career ready standards and graduation requirements: The district already employs the EMIS for teachers and administrators to review student data and hosts a parent portal for parents containing each teacher's gradebook and website. The plan allows for PLCs within every school to develop capacity in teachers to utilize student data and create personalized learning environments for each student - the combination of the LMS and EMIS - and the ability to use these tools correctly - will greatly enhance the use of student data to determine progress.
    - (B) Personalized learning recommendations based on the student's current knowledge and skills, college and career ready standards and graduation requirements, and available content, instructional approaches and supports: The district will use PLCs to encourage the discussion of each and every child in order to develop personalized learning recommendations tailored to individual needs and progress.
- (v) Accommodations and high-quality strategies for high need students: The district has in place an Early Warning Data System within the EMIS to identify high need students. The district also has in place many different types of supports and interventions to accommodate and address individual learning needs, i.e. extended learning time, small group instruction, advisories, interventions, etc.

c. Mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students to track and manage their learning: Within the Theory of Action Plan - the district will acquire a Learning Management System and provide for the development of student technology skills in order to enable all students to track and manage their own learning. All students will receive orientation training and secondary students will receive training in troubleshooting skills.

The applicant scores high. The Theory of Action Plan as put forth directly builds on work already being implemented within

the district.  This increases the likelihood of success. The Theory of Action Plan clearly and concisely draws connections from the district Strategic Plan to the RttT-D grant - for purposes of improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment to support all students to graduate college and career ready. The approach to implementing the outlined instructional strategies is ambitious yet achievable. The district will roll out the initiative in thirds - allowing for a complete and thorough implementation over time. If all goes as planned - each student will be able to accelerate his or her learning and support his or her needs.

| (C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points) | 20 | 20 |
|---|---|---|

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant demonstrates success with a high-quality five year strategic plan enhanced by the Theory of Action Plan proposed for improving learning and teaching through this grant by personalizing the learning environment, implementing instructional strategies.

a. The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan for engaging teachers and leaders in training, and in professional teams or communities:

- (i) The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies
    - Will use PLCs to focus on data driven decision making
    - Will focus professional development to enhance and formalize the PLC process through the Customized Learning and Success Planning (CLASP) process
    - Will use high-quality coaches to model and support personalized learning instruction
    - Coaches are already in place
    - Coaching plan began August 2012
    - Coaches are limited to 4 PLCs per week and 10 - 15 teachers per PLC
    - Teachers participate in an Individual Learning Cycle
    - Teachers are assigned by principal based on TEAM data
    - Each coach is assigned no more than 4 teachers per learning cycle
    - 5 learning cycles per year.
- (ii) The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan to adapt content and instruction through the implementation of the Common Core and 1:1 technology.
    - Will use the transition to the Common Core as springboard
    - Will incorporate project and problem based learning to achieve Common Core Standards
    - Will implement a 1:1 technology initiative in middle and high school
    - Will implement a blended technology model in the elementary
    - Will employ TPaCK Trainer/Coaches to provide professional development for teachers defining purpose of the lesson and then technology to support learning.
- (iii) The applicants demonstrates a high-quality plan for frequent measure of student progress
    - Will focus on collaboration
    - Will focus on what students are learning
    - Will ground PLCs in Richard Dufour's  work with emphasis on the four essential questions of effective PLCs
    - Will use multiple measures as benchmarks of student progress
    - Will use Discovery Education formative assessments three times per year
    - Will also use data housed in EMIS and LMS to further measure student progress
- (iv) The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan to improve teacher and principal practice and effectiveness
    - Will use Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) and TAP model (Teacher and Student Advancement)
    - Models include multiple measures including observation and student academic performance
    - Will use TAP rubric for evaluation in all schools and TAP model in TAP schools
    - Personalizing the learning environment is among the expectations of this model
    - E-Team to support implementation

b. The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan identifying access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress

- (i) The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan to provide teachers and principals with actionable information
    - The high-quality plan proposes the movement of data from a traditional format to a dynamic and fluid process through the use of technology. The district already gathers a significant amount of student data and through the

use of the EMIS and planned LMS systems will make this data available and interoperable for the teachers and principals.

- (ii) The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan to provide high-quality learning resources
  - Will include college and career ready standards through the full implementation of the Common Core as previously stated
  - Will include many prescriptive digital programs to identify student progress
  - Will further build on existing foundation to build a Digital Learning Management System for teachers and students.
- (iii) The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan to provide processes and tools to match student needs
  - Will employ Customized Learning and Success Planning (CLASP) processes and tools to match instruction and learning to student need
  - Will use PLCs to distribute, discuss, develop this process and tool identification
  - Will employ data driven decision making

c. The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan for delivering training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable the structure of an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress:

- (i) The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan for gathering information from district teacher evaluation systems, collective educator effectiveness and school culture for the purpose of continuous school improvement.
  - Will use student achievement data tied to teacher performance
  - Will use Tennessee TEAM and the TAP model for teacher evaluation
  - Will include quantitative and qualitative data
  - Will include a redesigned model for instructional coaching
  - Will renew focus on collaboration
  - Will renew focus on data driven decision making
  - Will include transparency as a tool to enhance forward progress
- (ii) The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan for developing training, systems, and practices increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps
  - Will provide a variety of methods for teachers and principals to access professional development
  - Will build professional development programs on data received from student assessments and teacher evaluations
  - Will support professional development through PLCs, pacing guides and the Office of Accountability

d. The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. The below list is indicative of the systems that are already in place in the district to build highly effective teachers and principals.

- TEAM and TAP evaluation systems provide a system wide comprehensive strategy to improve instruction
- APEX incentive pay structure - encouraging the best teachers to work in schools with the highest need
- Teach Here Initiative
- Leadership Academy Fellowship
- New Principals Academy

The applicant scores high. The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan that clearly and concisely describes the goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. The narratives and attachments also include additional evidence of goals, activities, and deliverables that are already in place within the district that provide a solid foundation for the proposal.

Key goals include the development of a process that will be facilitated with full implementation of the Common Core State Standards through an instructional program that is centered on the development of a personalized learning environment for each student. The district will use 1:1 technology and the creation of an LMS system enabling teachers, leaders, and students to access information and individualize and accelerate student learning.

The district will employ a teacher evaluation system grounded in teacher observation and student academic performance. Through the PLC process, teachers will collaborate and receive supports - using data driven decision making to drive student learning and effective instruction. Programs are already in place employing resources from within and outside of the district to enhance teacher and principal leadership.

# D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| (D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points) | 15 | 14 |
| --- | --- | --- |

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The district successfully demonstrates a high-quality plan to support comprehensive policies, infrastructure, support and resources when and where they are needed.

1. The applicant demonstrates LEA practices, policies and rules that facilitate personalized learning.

- (a) The district demonstrates a well-organized central office with a high-quality plan for changes with the proposal
    - The current organizational structure is aligned with the 5 year Strategic Plan which is aligned with the Theory of Action
    - The district will create a new executive division - The Office of Innovation and Strategy
        - Will include project management for grant implementation
        - Will included project integration with Curriculum and Instruction, Technology and Human Resources
- (b) The district demonstrates sufficient flexibility and autonomy. School leadership teams are provided with flexibility and autonomy in:
    - Hiring
    - School Schedules
    - Extended Learning Programs
    - Title I budgeting
    - Weighted average staffing formula
- (c) The district demonstrates a high-quality plan for progress and earned credit based on demonstrated mastery
    - Presently the district provides students with flexibility and options in the area of mathematics
    - Through the grant - the district will look to provide students PLEs across the curriculum while still maintaining peer groups
- (d) The district demonstrates the ability to provide students with learning opportunities multiple times and in multiple comparable ways and demonstrates a high-quality plan to enhance the current program through the proposed grant
    - Acknowledges that current practices do not optimally meet the needs of all students
    - Will build upon the existing practices to create classroom environments and develop instructional strategies that provide all students with multiple times and multiple ways to meet learning objectives through the proposed grant
- (e) The district demonstrates methods that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students and demonstrates a high-quality plan to enhance current practices and supports through the proposed grant.
    - The district demonstrates strategies and procedures targeting students with disabilities and English Learners
    - The district acknowledges that the strategies and procedures can be improved upon
    - The district exceeded state target for achievement gap closure for English Language Learners
    - The district will build upon the existing programs with the proposed grant to enhance differentiated instructional opportunities

The applicant scores high. The applicant has included key goals, activities, a timeline, dliverables, and responsible parties.The applicant has in place comprehensive policies, infrastructures, supports and resources where and when they are needed. The applicant acknowledges areas that can be improved - and appropriately targets those areas with a high-quality plan. The Office of Innovation and Strategy is a new and intriguing idea which will greatly enhance the applicant's ability to implement the grant proposal.

The plan for providing students with opportunities for earned credit based on mastery is not clear. Presently the applicant utilizes differentiated instruction, traveling math teachers and student attendance in other classrooms and other schools to accelerate mathematical instruction. It is not clear how the district will use the funds from the grant to accomplish "much broader access to curriculum and instruction" as stated.

| (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
| --- | --- | --- |

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan for school infrastructure:

(a) The applicant demonstrates access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to all stakeholders regardless of income

- Students and educators have access to a wide array of content and learning resources that support effective instruction within the school
- Students and parents have access to a wide array of web-based resources outside of the school
- The Parent Portal provides parents and teachers a link student grades, homework and assignments
- The PLE supported by the grant will further enhance this infrastructure

(b) The applicant demonstrates appropriate levels of technical support through the Office of Information Technology

- The applicant hosts a system wide help desk
- Parents and educators can access help on provided help pages and tutorials
- Regional technical support hubs host groups of schools
- Building level technical coordinators provide direct support to teachers and students
- With the grant - the applicant will assign each school a TPaCK Coach to further support the integration of technology into instruction and an on-site technician to assist with hardware and software issues
- With the grant - secondary students will be trained to help with break/fix issues

(c) The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan with the clear purpose of making student information available in an open data format to use the data in other electronic learning systems

- The applicant currently houses information in the EMIS systems and Parent Portal
- The district will use grant funds to purchase a LMS to allow connectivity between the extended learning programs, service providers, community partners and family households

(d) The applicant demonstrates an Interoperable data systems EMIS

- The system houses student data for the past 7 years
- System usage is widespread throughout the applicant
- Information is available to applicant personnel, school administrators and teachers
- System houses applicant financial data
- System will incorporate teacher performance data beginning with the 2011 - 2012 school year

The applicant scores high. The applicant has a high-quality plan built upon a comprehensive existing district infrastructure. Through the EMIS system, the applicant has vast amounts of student data - and through the grant will interface the existing data system with a LMS creating real time exportable information for teachers, school administrators and district personnel.

# E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)** | 15 | 11 |

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant demonstrates an approach to continuously improve its plan.

The applicant has a strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress. The applicant describes how it will monitor, measure and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by RttT-D.

The applicant will:

- Establish an Office of Innovation and Strategy to oversee the continuous improvement process.
    - The Chief Innovation Officer (CIO) will monitor and measure district investments
    - The CIO will establish and facilitate PLE Committee comprised of 25 - 30 members including school personnel, parents and students
- Initiate the strategic planning process led by the Strategic Plan Steering Committee
- Incorporate the development of a formal protocol for program evaluation modeled after the ROI report
- Charge the Office of Accountability with the task of developing an Evaluation Framework based on the ROI report

The applicant scores in the medium range. Although the improvement process is discussed, timely and regular feedback are not explained. The development of a single report based on the district ROI - while comprehensive - is not timely and regular feedback. A regular and timely report to the public should be a part of the feedback process.

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)** | 5 | 3 |

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant demonstrates ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders:

- Will be lead by the Office of Public Affairs in conjunction with CIO
- Will be launched with a multi-media marketing campaign
- Will add an information page to the district website
- Will add the grant to its annual Strategic Plan Update
- Will add the grant to the Superintendent "State of the Schools" presentation
- Will continue to host town halls, teacher talks and public forums
- Will continue to use the Board of Education
- Will continue to distribute two monthly newsletters to staff

The applicant score is medium. While there is much communication from the district - there is no organized definitive commitment to communicate information specific to the grant to the public.

| (E)(3) Performance measures (5 points) | 5 | 1 |
|---|---|---|

**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant demonstrates ambitious yet achievable performance measures and annual targets.

(a). Rationale

(b). Rigorous, timely, and formative leading information

(c). Review and improve the measure over time

The applicant scores low. Although ambitious yet achievable performance measures and annual targets are listed - the rational, provision of rigorous, timely, and formative leading information, as well as how it will review and improve the measure over time are not explained.

| (E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points) | 5 | 1 |
|---|---|---|

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve its plan.

The applicant has an approach to evaluated the effectiveness of its plan.

- Will work with the University of Tennessee at Knoxville's Institute for Assessment and Evaluation
- Will conduct two surveys year 1 from students, teachers and possibly parents
- Will gather feedback on the implementation process
- Will gather consistent and routine student performance data

More productively use time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results

- Will work with the Tennessee Consortium on Research, Evaluation and Development to assess the APEX compensation system for teachers

The applicant scores low. Plans for evaluating effectiveness do not clearly extend beyond year 1. Although more productive use of money is discussed with teacher compensation, time and other resources are not included.

# F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

|  | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)** | 10 | 10 |

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant's budget includes narrative and tables detailing a high-quality plan for grant fund distribution:

(a) The applicant identifies all funds that will support the project: in addition to the grant - the project will be funded through the applicant general fund and Federal Tech-Access E-Rate.

(b) The applicant provides a high-quality reasonable and sufficient plan to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal.

(c) The applicant clearly provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities

- (i) The applicant includes a description of all of the funds
- (ii) The applicant includes identification of the funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period, as described in the proposed budget and budget narrative, with a focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments

The applicant scores high.  The applicant has committed a significant portion of district available funds to support the grant proposed initiatives.  The applicant lists in detail all funding and an appropriate rationale for the proposed plan.  The applicant details expenditures that will occur annually and which are one time fees.  The applicant demonstrates a realistic plan that is both ambitious and achievable for the roll out of the initiatives and the usage of funds.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)** | **10** | **10** |

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant demonstrates a plan for sustaining the project's goals after the term of the grant. The plan includes support from State and local government leaders and financial support.

- The plan is concretely tied to the current district strategic plan Excellence for All Children
- The district is committed to the implementation of the grant with or without grant funding
- The plan describes the reallocation of district funds that will support the grant in years to come
    - The plan anticipates a reduction in the need for hard cover textbooks
    - The plan anticipates a reduction in student remediation required at the secondary level
    - The plan anticipates a reduction in the need for a block schedule
    - The plan anticipates the continued financial contributions from public and private funds

The applicant scores high. The applicant demonstrates a plan for funding sources to sustain the grant over time.  The applicant demonstrates a strong commitment to the overall success of the grant and the ability of the grant to help meet the goals of the strategic plan that is already in place.

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)** | **10** | **7** |

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

(1) The applicant provides a description of coherent and sustainable partnerships:

- The district has established a memorandum of understanding with the Local Education Fund, the Great Schools Partnership to manage partnerships.
- Funding has been provided by the City of Knoxville and Knox County government, United Way of Greater Knoxville, and local hospitals and health care providers

(2) The applicant identifies 10 population-level desired results.

(3) The applicant describes how the partnership will:

- (a) The applicant will use the EMIS to track the selected indicators and provide each community school with a Site Coordinator
- (b) The applicant will target its resources through a site-based committee structure
- (c) The applicant will develop a strategy to scale the model from four elementary schools to all 49 elementary schools thereby including the participation of all elementary students
- (d) The applicant will use the site-based committee to review data and improve results

(4) The applicant describes how the partnership will integrate education and other services through the site-based committee which will be given the autonomy to make decisions based on the unique needs of the students and availability of resources

(5) The applicant describes how it will build the capacity of staff in participating schools

- (a) The applicant describes assessment of the needs and assets of participating students
- (b) The applicant describes the identification and inventory of the needs and assets of the school and community
- (c) The applicant has created a decision-making process and infrastructure
- (d) The applicant describes a process for engaging parents and families of participating students
- (e) The applicant describes a process for routinely assessing the progress through the site based coordinator

(6) The applicant identifies ambitious yet achievable performance measures for desired results for students.

The applicant scores medium. The applicant does not clearly explain how the 10 desired results are aligned to RttT-D, and the applicant does not clearly explain how parents will be involved in the process.

## Absolute Priority 1

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| Absolute Priority 1 | Met/Not Met | Met |

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college and career ready standards and graduation requirements; accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; increasing the effectiveness of educators; expanding student access to the most effective educators; decreasing achievement gaps across student groups; and increasing the rate at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

The applicant has committed to creating Personalized Learning Environments for all students by:

- Implementing the Common Core State Standards which will prepare students to graduate college and career ready
- Creating a 1:1 technology environment for all secondary students and a blended technology environment for all elementary students allowing students to personalize and manage their own learning.
- Purchasing a Learning Management System that will allow for the integration of existing district data systems; enabling students, parents, teachers, administrators and district personnel to manage and track student progress
- Utilizing a teacher evaluation system that is tied to observation and student performance data
- Utilizing PLCs to track and monitor student data, instruction and professional development
- Providing district personnel with the professional development and support required for success
- Providing additional funding for project success
- Providing a strong commitment for moving forward
-

| Total | 210 | 185 |
|---|---|---|

## Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|---|---|
| Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points) | 15 | 15 |

**Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:**

Optional Budget Projects

Student Information System Management

Present system is outdated
- Would enhance the capabilities and impact of the overall grant
- Applicant will commit funds

The applicant scores high for the  - Student Information System Management.  This goal provides the applicant with a new and current system to manage student data and is closely tied to the RttT-D grant proposal of developing Personalized Learning Environments through a primarily technology initiative. Although the applicant does not involve a second LEA - this Optional Budget would definitely enhance this very large district's ability to meet their RttT - D goals and objectives.

| Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points) | 15 | 7 |
|---|---|---|

**Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:**

Community School Extended Day Services

- On a limited level - would increase each sites ability to expand extended day services.
- The district already commits a significant amount of money to this project

The applicant scores low for the second optional budget request which will supplement a program already in place within the district, requesting $2 million to enhance a program that the district will spend $22 million over the four years of the grant.

This program is already in place and does not suggest a high quality plan for the specific area or population, does not involve a second LEA, and is already financially supported by the district.